



Michigan **FIRE** Service Connection

Bureau of Fire Services
525 W. Allegan, 4th Floor
Lansing, MI 48913

(517) 241-8847
www.michigan.gov/bfs

December 2011

As many of you know, State Fire Marshal Ronald R. Farr has left state government and is now working for Underwriters Laboratories as their lead regulatory engineer for the United States and Canada as of November 28. The main focus of his new assignment will be to interact with the fire service organizations at the national, state and local levels.

Ron's career in the fire service spanned more than 44 years, in addition to his service as the state fire marshal. His assignments included fire fighter, company officer, department fire marshal, and fire chief. He served as a member then chair, of the State Fire Safety Board. He serves as the secretary/treasurer of the Michigan Fire Inspectors Society. He is also actively involved in many other national and international fire service organizations.

He has a strong national and international reputation as a member or the chair of several committees for the National Fire Protection Association helping author many of the codes we use today. As state fire marshal, he expanded the role of the Michigan Mutual Aid Box Alarm System and was instrumental in Michigan's hazard mitigation program. He oversaw the successful implementation of the Michigan Fire Safe Cigarette program,

Ron ensured that many of the Administrative Rules we use have been updated and made relevant. His strong support of fire fighter training has led to major improvements in the quality of training despite funding cuts. He also championed fire safety and prevention education, to include establishing Risk Watch programs through a grant from State Farm Insurance and championing a nationally recognized Risk Watch program run by Ms. Meredith Hawes from the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department. When Ron arrived at the Bureau of Fire Services, the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) in Michigan was at a 47 percent reporting rate. Now NFIRS reporting is well over 80 percent.

Ron is a visionary and a wonderful leader who has certainly forgotten more about the fire service than most of us will ever know. He traveled to every corner of this state reaching out to fire fighters and fire departments. We wish Ron well in his new endeavors, but certainly we will miss his energy, his spirit, his professionalism and his boundless enthusiasm. Ron has left a true legacy for the fire service. We thank him for his years of service and dedication to the citizens of Michigan. Because of Ron, the face of fire safety nationally and internationally is forever changed. To quote him from last month's newsletter this bit of parting advice for us all:

"Don't sit back and let others do the work . . . step to the plate . . . get involved and be a leader."

Respectfully,

Karen E. Towne
Acting State Fire Marshal

MISSION

The mission of the State Fire Marshal and the Bureau of Fire Services is to protect lives and property by fostering a fire safe environment through inspections, plan review, enforcement, regulation, fire fighter training, data collection and public fire education.

Table of Contents

December 2011

NFPA – Christmas tree fires likely to be more serious than average home fires	3
NFPA and USFA Join Forces Again to Put a Freeze on Winter Fires	4

Michigan News

Michigan Fire Fighters Return after Helping Battle Texas Wildfires	5
Documentary Film Highlights the Actions of Detroit Fire Fighters	5
Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department Wins 2011 Leland Gayheart Prevention Award	5
Michigan State Fire Safety Board Meeting Held December 8	6

NFIRS News	9
-------------------------	---

Office of Fire Fighter Training

Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council to Meet December 13 in Lansing	10
--	----

Other News

FNC Reports Coolant Leak Apparent Cause of Battery Fires in Chevy Volt	9
Underwriters Laboratories and Loss Prevention Certification Board Warn of Unauthorized Marks on Fire Sprinklers	10



National Fire Protection Association

The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety

NEWS RELEASES

Christmas tree fires likely to be more serious than average home fires
NFPA shares tips for safe holidays

December 1, 2011 – Festive lighting, windowsill candles and ornamented Christmas trees are staples of the holidays, but these decorative items also pose a fire risk if handled improperly. In 2005-2009, on average, one of every 18 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 141 total home fires.

Holiday lights and other decorative lighting were involved in an estimated average of 150 home fires per year during the same time. These fires caused an average of eight civilian deaths, 14 injuries, and \$8.5 million in direct property damage per year.

“December is an exciting time where almost every home on the block is accented with decorations and seasonal lighting,” said Lorraine Carli, vice president of communications for the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA). “Though decorations such as candles or Christmas trees certainly spread holiday cheer, it is important to follow basic safety steps so celebrations go off without a hitch.”

Video: A demonstration showing how flammable a dry Christmas tree can be as opposed to a tree watered regularly. http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=RNjO3wZDVIA

Here are NFPA’s tips for [safe holiday decorating](#):

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Check the packaging; some lights are only for indoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini light sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

For proper [Christmas tree safety](#):

- Keep your tree well watered. A dry tree can be extremely dangerous. See how flammable a dry Christmas tree can be in comparison to a well-watered tree in a [demonstration by NFPA](#).
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Get rid of the tree when it is dry. Check with your local community to find a recycling program.
- Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

About the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

NFPA is a worldwide leader in fire, electrical, building, and life safety. The mission of the international nonprofit organization founded in 1896 is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

NFPA and USFA join forces again to Put a Freeze on Winter Fires



Emmitsburg, Md., November 10, 2011 – As we move closer to winter and home fire deaths begin to increase, the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA) and the [U.S. Fire Administration](#) (USFA) remind everyone that fire safety and prevention are especially important in the coming months. Because home fires are more prevalent in winter than in any other season, NFPA and USFA are once again jointly sponsoring a special initiative – *Put a Freeze on Winter Fires* – to help raise public awareness about winter fires.

“These fires are a painful reminder of what we see every year – the temperatures drop and fires increase,” said NFPA President Jim Shannon. According to NFPA statistics, space heaters account for about one third of home heating fires and approximately 80 percent of the home heating fire deaths.

The USFA’s [Winter Residential Building Fires](#) (PDF, 1 MB) report shows that each winter an estimated 108,400 residential building fires occur in the United States, resulting in 945 deaths, 3,825 injuries, and \$1.7 billion in property loss. Cooking is the leading cause of winter residential building fires at 36 percent followed by heating at 23 percent. Winter residential building fires occur mainly in the early evening hours, peaking from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

“The winter season brings the highest number of home fires, more than at any other time of year,” said USFA’s Deputy Fire Administrator Glenn Gaines. “Home fires increase in part due to cooking and heating. Winter storms can also interrupt electrical service and cause people to turn to alternative heating sources that contribute to the increased risk of fire during the winter months.”

The NFPA and USFA recommend following these safety tips to prevent winter home fires:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period, turn off the stove.
- Space heaters need space; keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from each heater.
- Check electrical cords often and replace cracked or damaged electrical or extension cords. Do not try to repair them.
- Never use your oven or stovetop to heat your home. They are not designed for this purpose and can be a fire hazard. In addition, carbon monoxide (CO) gas might kill people and pets.
- Do not put your live Christmas tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- Avoid using lighted candles. If you must use candles, place them in sturdy candleholders that won’t burn.
- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes and smoke outside.

“Winter fires are preventable,” Gaines emphasized. “Everyone should find out what they need to know to prevent a tragedy and have a safe winter season.”

For more information about the causes of winter fires, winter storm fire safety, holiday fire safety, and tips that will help prevent the incidence of fire in the home, visit the USFA website at www.usfa.fema.gov/winter and the NFPA website at www.nfpa.org/winter.

About the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA)

As an entity of the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency, the mission of the [USFA](#) is to provide national leadership to foster a solid foundation for our fire and emergency services stakeholders in prevention, preparedness, and response.

About the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

NFPA is a worldwide leader in fire, electrical, building, and life safety. The mission of the international nonprofit organization founded in 1896 is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

Michigan News...

Michigan Fire Fighters Return after Helping Battle Texas Wildfires

Twenty-two Michigan fire fighters from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources were deployed to Texas to assist the Texas fire service battle raging wildfires that threatened 252 of 254 Texas counties. The wildfires claimed four lives including two fire fighters, destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes, and destroyed or injured an untold number of livestock.

Video footage of Texas wildfire images: <http://vimeo.com/28642320>

A report from CBS Affiliate WWMT, Channel 3 in Kalamazoo highlights the return of these fire fighters at: <http://www.wwmt.com/news/michigan-1399127-wildfires-home.html>

Documentary Film Highlights the Actions of Detroit Fire Fighters “Burn: One Year on the Frontlines of the Battle to Save Detroit”

Follow the link to read the story and view the video by Kim Russell a reporter from WXYZ, Channel 7 in Detroit.

<http://www.wxyz.com/dpp/home/documentary-aims-to-put-heroism-of-detroit-firefighters-on-the-big-screen>

Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department Wins 2011 Leland Gayheart Prevention Award

The University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center congratulates the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department for winning the 2011 Leland Gayheart Prevention Award for their Customized Outreach Project. This unique project provides specialized fire safety education and outreach to special needs individuals including those with hearing, sight, and mobility impairments. A resource manual for other departments to duplicate the program is now available. For more information on the Customized Outreach Project, please call Meredith Hawes at Grand Traverse Metro Fire (231) 947-3000, ext. 1234.

This award is presented jointly by the University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center and the Gayheart family, in honor of Leland Gayheart, a 23-year old firefighter who lost his life due to a devastating burn injury in 1991. For more information on this award, please visit the Trauma Burn Center website: <http://www.traumaburn.org/prevention/leland.shtml>

Michigan State Fire Safety Board Meeting Held December 8

The State Fire Safety Board met on December 8, 2011 in Constitution Hall, in Lansing. Highlights of the meeting included a Bureau of Fire Services update from Acting State Fire Marshal Karen E. Towne, an update on the status of the proposed Adult Foster Care Rules, an update on the proposed Fireworks Safety Act, and the 2012 meeting schedule for the State Fire Safety Board. Board meetings are held four to six times a year at 1:00 p.m. in the Dorothy Judd Conference Room, 4th Floor, North Tower, Constitution Hall, 525 West Allegan Street, Lansing, MI, unless otherwise posted.

NFIRS News

NFIRS Reporting Summary

The Bureau of Fire Services, as mandated by Public Act 207 of 1941, as amended, collects all fire incidents from the fire departments in the state of Michigan. The fire reports are then released to the United States Fire Administration (USFA) through the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) uses this system to track department reporting which is a requirement for fire departments to apply for federal fire grants for their departments. The information is also used to produce fire codes, public education and plays a major role in reducing injuries and fatalities due to fire emergencies. The Michigan statistics reported in NFIRS for the past five years for civilian and fire fighter fatalities and injuries are as follows:

Year	Civilian Fatalities	Civilian Injuries	Fire Fighter Fatalities	Fire Fighter Injuries
2006	139	727	1	618
2007	145	749	3	573
2008	158	670	2	536
2009	164	756	1	546
2010	138	602	1	641

2010 Fire Department Reporting Activity

Below is a link to a document reflecting reporting activity for all departments in the state of Michigan. Please take a look and check out your department's reporting activity. Is it what you expected? If you have questions, please contact Rhonda Howard at (517) 241-0691 or howardr2@michigan.gov.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dleg/Non-Reporting_FDs2010_346754_7.pdf

NFIRS Account Passwords

NFIRS account passwords now automatically deactivate if you have not logged into the system within **45 days** of the last login, rather than 60 days as it was previously.

A user will begin receiving a notification via email message seven days before the date of expiration. The message is sent each day until the account is accessed, or the account is locked on the date of expiration. The purpose of email is to remind the user to take action before the account expires.

Please ensure that the email listed on your NFIRS account is accurate. For questions regarding your NFIRS account, please contact Rhonda Howard at howardr2@michigan.gov or (517) 241-0691.

Reminder to Submit NFIRS Reports Online

As of January 1, 2008, the Bureau of Fire Services no longer accepts paper reports. The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) is available online and the Bureau of Fire Services requests that all fire departments enter these reports using this online system. If you need assistance in setting up this program please contact Rhonda Howard (contact information is listed below).

Fatal Fire Reporting

In addition to the basic NFIRS report, the Bureau of Fire Services also tracks all fire-related deaths. These statistics are used for program development, legislation, and prevention programs. Fire departments responding to a fatal fire are required to submit the "Michigan Fatal Fire Report" within 24 to 48 hours of the death. The report form is available at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dleg_bccfs_fatalrep_94417_7.pdf

Civilian Fatal Fire Statistics 2010 – Reported as of September 28, 2011

January	19	July	9
February	16	August	5
March	15	September	7
April	14	October	16
May	6	November	3
June	5	December	8

Civilian Fatal Fire Statistics 2011 – Reported as of September 28, 2011

January	19	July	4
February	8	August	6
March	14	September	2
April	18	October	3
May	10	November	1
June	3		

Questions?

If you have questions regarding your department, NFIRS reporting functions or fatal fire reporting, please contact Rhonda Howard at (517) 241-0691 or howardr2@michigan.gov.

Importing Your Vendor Program NFIRS Reports Using the Bulk Import Utility Tool

(if you are using the Free Data Entry Tool please disregard)

Prior to import uploading (importing) your incident data, you will need to export your incident information from your vendor's software to a "delimited text file". You will need to save the exported data to a folder created on your desktop or in your "My Document" file. You will then be able to locate this file when you are in the Bulk Import Utility mode when browsing for the files to import. To learn how to do this, you should contact your vendor's customer support number.

Instructions for Using NFIRS Bulk Import Utility

Go to the following internet address: www.nfirs.fema.gov

Click on "Web-Based Tools"

Click on "Bulk Import Utility" (left hand side of screen)

Click on "Begin BIU Import" (left hand side of screen)

If a screen comes up saying something about a "secure area" – Click on "OK"

You will now be at your Login Screen.

NOTE: Recommended you save this as a "Favorite" Internet website.

Login with the following:

Username:

State: MI

Password: (all lower case no spaces)

- Once login screen comes up your e-mail address should appear in the first box at the top of the page. If your e-mail address does not appear in the e-mail address field, enter a valid email address.
- **Make sure to check the box for both Accept Invalid Records and Overwrite Existing Incidents.**
- Click the first Browse button (use the scroll bar on right if the Browse buttons are not showing)
- Select your file to be imported and double click on it, this will place the file next to the browse button. You may attach up to 3 files at a time.
- After files have been selected click the "Upload Files".

When the import processing is complete, the user will receive an email notifying that the import is complete and will contain a link for the user to view whether files were imported as valid or invalid.

After the user clicks on the link they will be taken to the Bulk Import Utility page to enter their login information. A file download box will be displayed. The user must specify to save the file to the computer. The filename will include a long, numeric identifier, as in the past. The zipped file will be downloaded and saved to the PC. To extract and review the files, the Winzip program is necessary.

For complete information refer to the Bulk Import Utility Info page or the Steps to Use the Bulk Import Utility document, available after login to the Bulk Import Utility website. Should the user have any other questions, they can contact Rhonda Howard, NFIRS System Administrator at 517-241-0691 or email address: howardr2@michigan.gov Monday – Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm.

NFIRS Reporting in Michigan for 2011

MICHIGAN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Michigan's Fire Prevention Code **mandates** local fire chiefs to report any fire resulting in loss of life or property to the Bureau of Fire Services. Michigan has adopted NFIRS 5.0 as the reporting standard, a computerized reporting system. **A 2011 Activity Report for all fire departments, including reporting and non-reporting is now available on our website at**

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/2011_Non-Reporting_FDs_359741_7.pdf

http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-28077_42271_42321---,00.html **under the statistics section.** If a fire department has no activity during a given month, they are required to submit a "No Activity" report.

Fire Departments who are not participating in NFIRS 5.0 will not receive federal grant funding or training funding provided through the Federal Emergency Management Administration. In addition to jeopardizing federal dollars, fire department employees are not eligible for specialized training provided through the Michigan State Police.

Fire reporting plays a major role in reducing injuries, fatalities, and economic losses from fire and related emergencies. Fire codes, public fire education, and legislative actions are all driven by fire loss statistics. Complete and accurate data is essential to effective solutions to many of our fire problems.

Michigan Fire Service Directory

PLEASE check your department's E-MAIL address in the directory. The Bureau has noticed that a lot of the email addresses are not up to date. The online directory can be found at:

http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/fire_directory/. **Please note that the directory is updated quarterly.**

Changes to department contact information may not be reflected in the directory immediately.

Below is information on how to obtain the form to update your department's information in the directory. You may submit the form by fax to (517) 335-4061, e-mail to howardr2@michigan.gov, or mail to Bureau of Fire Services, Attn: Rhonda Howard, PO Box 30700, Lansing, MI 48909. Thank you in advance for your help to keep the most accurate information in the directory.

Fire Service Directory Update Form:

You may locate the form on our website at www.michigan.gov/bfs, click on Forms and Publications, the form will be listed under the section called "Forms Listing".

Office of Fire Fighter Training



News and Notes from the OFFT

By Joseph A. Grutza, Director, Office of Fire Fighter Training



Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council Meeting Information

Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council to Meet December 13 in Lansing

10:00 a.m.	WORK SESSION: Constitution Hall; 525 W. Allegan Street; Hutchinson Conference Room (Lower/Atrium South Level); Lansing, MI 48913
1:30 p.m.	REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING: Constitution Hall; 525 W. Allegan Street; Hutchinson Conference Room (Lower/Atrium South Level); Lansing, MI 48913

Both meetings are open to the public. The meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Individuals attending the meeting are requested to refrain from using scented personal care products, in order to enhance accessibility for everyone. People with disabilities requiring additional accommodations in order to participate in the meeting should contact Joe Grutza at (517) 241-8847 at least 10 work days before the event. The Division on Deaf & Hard of Hearing will provide assistance in locating assistive listening devices or interpreters, with advance notice, at (517) 373-1837.

The above is provided pursuant to Sections 4 and 5 of Act 267 of Public Acts of 1976, being Sections 15.264 and 15.265 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

Other News...

FNC Reports Coolant Leak Apparent Cause of Battery Fires in Chevy Volt

Fox News reports that sources at General Motors indicate that a battery pack coolant leak appears to be the likely cause of fires in the Chevrolet Volt. See the link below for the full story.

<http://www.foxnews.com/leisure/2011/12/06/source-claims-coolant-leak-is-likely-cause-chevy-volt-fires/>

Underwriters Laboratories and Loss Prevention Certification Board (LPCB) Warn of Unauthorized Marks on Fire Sprinklers (Release 11PN-45)

Northbrook, IL; Watford, UK - December 5, 2011 -- UL (Underwriters Laboratories) and the Loss Prevention Certification Board (LPCB) are notifying distributors, contractors, regulatory agencies, building owners and authorities having jurisdiction that the fire sprinklers identified below bear unauthorized UL and LPCB Certification Marks. The Fire Sprinklers have not been evaluated by UL or LPCB to the appropriate Standards for Safety and it is unknown if these Fire Sprinklers comply with any safety requirements.

Product: FIREX Upright and Sidewall type Fire Sprinklers

Number of Units: Unknown

Manufacturer: Unknown

Date of Manufacture: Unknown

Thanks to all of you for the continued articles, information, photos and comments – your input is important. Any questions regarding the Bureau of Fire Services newsletter may be directed to Terry Fobbs, Ph.D. at (517) 373-8331 or fobbst@michigan.gov If you desire to change your email address please follow these three steps:

Step 1: At the end of the Fire Service Connection you will see this notice and link:

For additional information about the Bureau of Fire Services and to subscribe or unsubscribe to the “Michigan Fire Service Connection” go to:

www.michigan.gov/bfs

Click “Sign up for our newsletter” and follow the steps to subscribe and unsubscribe.

Step 2: When you reach the Bureau of Fire Service website and click on the sign up for our newsletter link. You will be directed to this page:

http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-28077_42271-188449--,00.html

Monthly Newsletter Sign-Up

Enter Your Name:

Organization:

Your E-Mail Address:

REQUIRED!

Add me to the list: ☒

Delete me from the list: ☐

[Submit Query](#)

[Reset](#)

To Subscribe:

Check the **"Add me to the list"** box before submitting the form.

To Unsubscribe:

Fill in the form and check the **"Delete me from the list"** check box before submitting the form.

Step 3: To change your email address, fill out the form with your old email address and click on the Delete me from the list button and press Submit. This action will remove the old email address. Next fill out the form with your new email address and click on the Add me to the list button and press Submit. This action will add your new email address to the subscribers list.

For additional information about the Bureau of Fire Services and to subscribe or unsubscribe to the "Michigan Fire Service Connection" go to:

www.michigan.gov/bfs

Click "Sign up for our newsletter" and follow the steps to subscribe and unsubscribe.



<http://www.michigan.gov/lara>

LARA is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids, services and other reasonable accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.